

T H E
Dissenters Vindicated ;

Short View

OF THE
PRESENT STATE
OF THE

Protestant Religion

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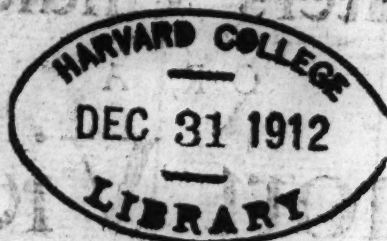
It is now profess'd in the Episcopal Church in
England, the Presbyterian Church in *Scotland*,
and the Dissenters in Both.

In Answer to some Reflections in Mr. *Webster's* Two Books
Publish'd in *Scotland*.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the Year MDCVII.

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It is now in the Episcopal Church in
England, the Protestant Church in
and the Diocese in Berlin.

Printed in the Year MDCLVII.

THE PREFACE.

THE following Sheets containing but parts of the Debate in this Affair, with Mr. Webster, it will be necessary to add some short Hints, to inform the World of the whole Case; and as the immediate Matter of Fact is the only Method for direct Information; I shall make a short Abridgement of the whole Historical Part, as follows.

Mr. Webster is a Presbyterian Clergyman in Edinburgh, and Minister of the Tol-Booth-Church; That I may do him full Justice, I shall acquaint the World with his general Character, as well as my own particular Opinion.

He is a Man of Learning and Parts, abundance of Wit, and better read in the Polite part of Language than many of his Neighbours; an Extraordinary Preacher, and I hope a very Good Man; his chief Misfortune is a Warm Head, Ungovern'd Temper, which when it gets the better of him, darkens all his shining Qualities, and strangely exposes him.

PREFACE.

This Gentleman appear'd vigorously for the Union of the Two Kingdoms all the time of the Treaty, and having had the Honour of frequent and intimate Conversation with him, I have often heard him declare, He believ'd the Church of Scotland could not be safe without the Union; in several Places, he was the first Promoter of it, and proselyted others to it.

The very Week the Treaty was finish'd, and touch'd with the Scepter, without discovering the least Alteration, in his Conversation at least to me, he publishes a Book, Entitled, *Lawful Prejudices: Or, the Sinfulness of the Union, &c.* In which Gross Invektives he lays down the Union as a National Perjury, Breach of Covenant, Destruction of the Church, &c.

Tho' I was surpriz'd at this, yet I had said nothing to it, being but a Stranger in the Place, had he not fallen upon the Dissenters in England, in a most unhandsome and unprecedented Manner.——When setting out the Danger of the Church of Scotland from the British Parliament, and Episcopal Hierarchy, to Exaggerate this, he says, P. 8: We can't trust the Dissenters in England, who deserve rather to be call'd Episcopal than Presbyterian!

As this I thought was Intolerable, I was eager to see his Arguments, to prove this Ground of Distrust; and behold they are Three.

1. That they all or most of them declare for a Moderate Episcopacy, and Baxterian Doctrine.——And to prove this he brings in Mr. Baxter and Dr. Bates making Concessions at the Conference at the Savoy, about Six and Forty Years ago.——An Excellent Proof I thought, that the Dissenters in general are now of the same Mind.

2. His

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2. His Second Argument is, *Their Signing the 37th Article of the Church of England*; in which he very unfairly repeats the first part of the Article, but leaves out the Explanation with which it is taken, and which is annex'd to it in the Confession of Faith of the Church of England, and made part of the Act.

3. The Third Charge is, *That the Dissenters by the Tenour of their Address in King James his Reign, countenanced the Dispensing Power, and that to rescue themselves from the Severity of our Law, they would give a Blow to all Laws.*—— And from these Reasons he argues, *They are not to be Trusted.*

Tho' I have had but very bad Luck at vindicating the Dissenters, and may have some Reason to think my self ill Treated, both by them, and for them, at the same time, yet I thought I could by no means abandon them in such a Case as this, being upon the spot, and having as I thought a visible Summon into this Service, I found my self under a Necessity of doing them Justice in the best manner I could.

But as I had a real Value for the Person of Mr. Webster, and was very loth to have a Personal Quarrel with him, much less to Expose him, and withal foreseeing it would be a pleasing Fray to none but the Enemies of the Union, who in some respects were the Enemies of both.—— In Civility therefore, and to prevent if possible a Breach, I sent him a very civil Letter, signifying, that I was sorry I found my self oblig'd to Debate some Points with him in print; that I thought it my Duty to defend the Dissenters who I found absent and injur'd, Expostulated with him, why he Treated them so, and professing my exceeding Respect for him, told him, I would use him agreeable to it, and begg'd his Pardon for necessary Plainness, since it must come so far.

I thought

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I thought a Letter so Civil might at least have procur'd a Return, and the Effect of that might have been a Conference; but he never gave me the Civility of an Answer at all: Upon which I publish'd a single Sheet only, in Answer to that part of the Book, relating to the Dissenters, taking no notice of his Argument about the Sinfulness of the Union at all.——In this Paper which I Entitled, The Dissenters in England vindicated from Reflections, in a late Pamphlet, call'd Lawful Prejudices, &c.

In this Sheet I us'd him with the utmost Tenderness and Civility; I made all possible Acknowledgment of my Respect to him, both in his Person and Office, how loth I was to Differ with him, how unfit I thought my self to Dispute with him, and professed that nothing but my Sense of Justice, and as I thought Duty to an absent and injur'd People, could oblige me to enter into this Contest with him.

I thought, I confess, nothing could be Civiller or Modester than the Usage I gave him, and never expected any thing but Gentleman-like Usage from him.——When on the contrary out comes an Answer, Entitled, The Author of the Lawful Prejudices, &c. Defended. In this Book he first Personates a Third Person, and calls himself only a Friend to the Author of the Lawful Prejudices, but afterwards appears in Person in it as the same Man.

And here, I confess, he surpriz'd not me only but all the Town, while instead of Argument, he gave a loose to his Passion, and flies out upon me with all the Opprobrious Terms, Harsh, Railing, Billingsgate Language, that his Fury could dictate to him, calling me abundance of ill Names, unbecoming a Gentleman, much more a Minister of the Gospel.

He had it seems a Letter sent him by some Body, perfectly without my Knowlege or Consent, neither did I know

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any thing of it, which came from—— He assumes upon his Judgment in Style, tho' never two were more different than that and mine; and prints part of this Letter, bidding the World guess at my Temper by it. Not content with this, he goes up and down the Town railing at and abusing me with all the mean and scandalous Methods of a Slanderer; thus if possible to conquer the Argument by conquering the Man.

I confess I was provok'd at this, and immediately drew up a short Piece, in which I first vindicated my Proceeding with him, and answer'd the Heat and Passion of the Gentleman in a manner, though respectful too, yet such as the just Resentment of his Usage might be expected to produce, and indeed I had us'd him severely enough, though I think in nothing unjustly or unhandsonely.

The honest and sober People in Edinburgh shew'd themselves exceedingly concern'd at this Breach, and I must do them the Justice, to say, that Universally the Ministers declar'd their dislike of it; and to prevent its going on, several of them apply'd themselves to me, to desire I would not write again: I readily promis'd them, if Mr. Webster would let the Dissenters alone, I would not say a Word, and would give him a friendly Meeting when he pleas'd; that I would refer it to Six of the Ministers, and he should name them all; and if they determin'd that I had Injur'd him in any thing, I would make him as publick an Acknowledgment as they should award.

His Friends besieg'd him with Intreaties on this Account, but all in-vain, he would neither meet me, refer it to the Ministers, nor forbear his Railing Book—— but brought it out as is noted above.

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*My Answer was in the Press, and the Copy finished, and the Title was **Passion and Prejudice the Support of One Another,** and both Destructive to the Happiness of the Nation, &c.*

While this was doing the Honest Well-meaning People apply'd themselves to me, and particularly some good People of Mr. Webster's Hearers, and entreated me not to expose him, nor carry on the Debate any farther.

I shall not enter here into the Reasons us'd with me on that Subject, nor the just value I had for the honest Principles of the Persons thus soliciting me. But when I consider'd the Rashness and Temper of the Man, otherwise I hope a good and useful Person, when I consider'd whose Work we were both doing, and what Interest such a Breach would carry on, I thought it was my part, who had been so long pressing the World to Peace, to practise it as an Example, and the Self-denial that was to follow was not very easie; yet in this I chose to lay aside my own Vindication, and bear the Slanders and Calumnies of my Enemies unanswered, not doubting, but while I thus pursue the publick Good, my own Character shall at last be clear'd some other way.

In this Temper I laid by my Satyr, though actually printed, lost all the Charge, and began the following Tract, in which I have spoken to the Case, without meddling with the Person; I think the Matter of Fact is all Just, I'm sure 'tis all True, and in stating the Fact, the Vindication not of the Dissenters only, but of the Church of England, and of Scotland, are necessary Consequences.

As for Mr. Webster, here is no mention of him, his Method is too foul for me, and I am much better pleased with this way of Return; I am thankful to those good Peace-makers, who acted Abigail's Part on this Occasion.

I believe

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I believe I have fully defended the Dissenters, I have spoken to all his Arguments; whether they are defeated or no, the Reader must be Judge, I am not solicitous.

Thus you have the short History of this Affair, and how the following Tract is introduc'd; I shall detain you no longer from the Subject, in which I hope the same Temper is preserved I have Exhorted others to. I shall make no Apologies for it, let it stand or fall by its own Merit.

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T H E
 Dissenters Vindicated ;
 O R, A
 Short View
 O F T H E
 P R E S E N T S T A T E
 O F T H E
 Protestant Religion in *BRITAIN*, &c.

I Always observ'd in such Cases as this, the only way to come at a Clear Understanding of Particulars, was to go back to their Generals ; to search the Original of things, and see from thence not how they are represented, but how they really are in their meer Nature, and Native Circumstances.

In doing this, I shall study, as much as in me lies, to give no Offence to any body, nor concern my self with any thing, however warmly said on that Head, but to my utmost, keep close to impartial Truth in Fact, and give my own Thoughts as calmly as I can.

Perhaps the Historical part may be counted superficial, and I am content it be so ; no body can expect

a succinct History of Religion in three Sheets of Paper, nor shall I, *remote as I am from Books, Vouchers, and Persons*, enter into many Quotations; designing no other History of these Affairs, but what every Man's Memory may reflect on, or by very short reading, be inform'd about.

I have no room to spare for Apologies; As I intend no Offence to any one, so I hope, no Man will take Offence at me, misconstrue my Meaning or cavil at Mistakes in the manner.— If they do, if they will raise Strife from what is design'd for Peace, the Strife shall be theirs, the Peace shall be mine; and to all false or railing Accusations, I answer in the words of the Text, in the 9th Verse of the Epistle of *Jude*, and no more.

In the beginning of the Fifteenth Century, this whole Island was under the intire absolute Diminution of Popery; Rulers and People too much united in following after Vanity and Idols, and very small faint Glimerings of the Glorious Resurrection of Truth were then only to be seen.

Henry VII. reigning in *England*, and *James IV.* in *Scotland*, had nothing in them inclining to an Alteration of Religion, but supinely slept — under the invincible Operation of the *Roman* Opiat: Priest-Craft, and the Pomp of Religion had doz'd Mankind, and that Glorious Light which the Spirit of GOD, by the Preaching of the Apostles, had spread thro' the World, seem'd so overclouded with the Universal Vail of Superstition, and vile Traditional Performances, that it look'd as if the General Dispensation was at an End, the Church of GOD compleated, and the World given up to Original Blindness.

I would not be misunderstood here, as if there were no Appearances, in particular Places and Persons, of a true Light; For God has never left the Church quite desolate: And I know what has been alledg'd of the *Waldenses*, *Albigenses*, and other suffering Christians—. But I desire to be taken as I mean, that a general and dreadful

dreadful Darkneſs had at that time overſpread the World, all the Potentates of *Europe* bow'd at the Feet of *Baal*; and the *Romiſh* Pontiff executed a Tyrannick Power without Controul; if there were any Profeſſors of Truth, they behooved to be Confefſors alſo; and what Light appear'd, tho' it was receiv'd with Love, it was a Gueſt that brought certain Death with it—: Indeed the wonderful Power of the inviſible irrefiſtible Grace of GOD was in nothing more conſpicuous, than in furniſhing almoſt all to whom he revealed his Truth, with ſuch a Love to it, Zeal for it, and Reſolution in it, that Perſecution and Martyrdom were but meer Agents in the Propagation of Truth; and *Sanguis Martyrum* was at that time more than ever prov'd to be *Semen Eccleſie*.

In this ſuffering poſture the Affairs of the Church ſtood at the coming of *Henry VIII.* to the Crown in *England*; the firſt part of his Reign gave little Hopes to any that a Reformation could have its Riſe in a Prince who committed the Famous *John Lambert* to the Fire, and appeared qualified to be the moſt Famous Perſecutor of Gods Church that ever was in the World; being in his Conduct Politick, in his Nature Cholerick and Cruel, in his Government Tyrannical, and in his Religion nothing at all, but ——— what was guided by his Ambition and Intereſt.

But behold how the Divine Power is magnified, in making his Enemies deſtroy themſelves; Pride, Ambition, Covetouſneſs, and the Wrath of Man in this day, brought to paſs the Glorious and determin'd Deſigns of God, and the Confuſions and Extravagancies of the World aſſiſted to open the Eyes of ſuch whoſe Hearts God at the ſame time had touch'd with his Grace; and now the great Light of Truth began to break out between the Clouds, and by wonderful and various ſteps of Providence, too long to relate, all the Miſts of Darkneſs, Ignorance and Superſtition fled away, and Truth in its Native Luſtre ſhone over theſe Parts of the World.

For now *Luther* had broke in upon Error in *Germany*; like a Torrent, the Kings of the Earth began to hate the Whore; and all the Northern part of *Europe* fell off from Idolatry, both Princes and People.

The various turns in *England* under *Henry VIII.* about the Article of Divorce, the Regale and other things, widened a Breach between him and the Pope; and those lucid Intervals gave such Breathings to the Reform'd Religion, that it advanc'd exceedingly, till even in his Reign, it crept into first his Cabinet, and then his Bed.

In this Crisis, he struck the two great Preliminary Strokes at the Root of Popery, in which, tho' I see no Ground to suggest he had any Religious aim, yet Providence, who acted him as the Instrument, without giving him the Principle, brought to pass the End by the involuntary Agency of what Means he thought fit.

These two Blows at Popery, which I call Preliminaries, were casting off the Pope's Supremacy, and overturning these Seminaries of Filthiness and Superstition, the Abbeys and Monasteries.

And here any Body may see the Reason of my going thus far back in this Account, and which perhaps they might begin to think Impertinent to my purpose. But the Case is this, Had King *Henry's* Zeal been for Reformation indeed, or rather had he not been acted by Pride in one, and Avarice in the other, that Step had been taken another way, which if it had, the Snares that have follow'd, had been perhaps prevented. I explain my self thus.

Had *Henry VIII.* been Enlightned by a true Knowledge, in proportion to his Circumstance, had his Fury been a Religious Zeal, ——— had he been acted by the Christian, not the Monarch, when he pull'd down the Supremacy of the Pope, he had erected the true Gospel-Supremacy of Christ Jesus, and in this unhappy Mistake, has been found all the brooding Snakes of Ecclesiastick Tyranny, which this part of the World has been plagued with ever since.

I'll repeat it another way yet plainer, I hope I shall be excused the Tautology.

Henry VIII. A meer Tyrant, a Man of no Religion in his inside, and but very little in the out side ; for the Tyrant was too rampant in him, to suffer him to be a Hypocrite, when he pull'd down the Supremacy of the Pope, immediately set up his own ; this was, I say, only dethroning one Devil to set up another ; however, the Church was yet Popish, the Reformation young, and the Heads of the Reformers were glad to lay hold of this Handle to pull down what they really struggled with, as Tyrannical ; not foreseeing that the Tyranny still remained, tho' the Masters were changed, or that this Monster call'd the Temporal Supremacy, was big with future Mischiefs, which generating from one another, would still bring the Church of God into, at least, unscriptural Bondage.

But let no Man read this with Prejudice at the Good Men who were the Agents, who in the simplicity of their Souls, did this, and by it laid the Ax effectually to the Root of Religious Subjection ; and the impious Ambition of the Church of *Rome* : If God Almighty for our Sins, and partly for Punishment, suffered yet this *Canaanite* to remain in the Bowels of the Reformation, without doubt he had his Divine Ends in it, which I shall not presume to enquire into.

On this Foundation has however been built, that unhappy Structure of Division, which has made such Chasms in God's Church, broke in so much upon our Charity, and fatally upon our more perfect Reformation, even to this Day.

For the Supremacy in Matters Ecclesiastical, being resolv'd in the King, began to produce strange Effects, and some Martyrs, as they call them, on the *Romish* side died for denying it, such as Sir *Thomas Moor*, Bishop *Fisher* and others, as in *Burnet's History of the Reformation, Vol. 1.* may be seen at large.

I shall touch at some of the Evils, that setting this Dignity on the head of the Temporal Prince brought with it; and these were two. *First*, That in Matters indifferent in themselves, the Command of the Civil Magistrate has Power to determine us, and make those indifferent things necessary, and hereon is built all our Ceremonial, that has since caused such Division in the Protestant Churches here. And, *Secondly*, This I give as the Reason, or rather the Occasion, that our *English* Church reformed into Episcopacy, and a Pompous Hierarchy, rather than a *Calvinistical* Parity.

This is what we mean by the *Regale*, which of course brought the *Pontificate* along with it, and in this *Scotland* had the Advantage of *England*; for that the Reformation in *Scotland* being not in the Direction of the Prince, but rather in Opposition to the Regent, the Queen Mother, the Pomp, the Magnificence, and the outside of the Matter, lost all the Reverence it had in the Court of Princes, where it seem'd to be caress'd from some Suitableness between them in Matters of Dominion.

'Tis true, Queen *Mary* resign'd this Authority to the Pope, and Queen *Elizabeth* was not very hasty in resuming it again, 'tis plain, from *Burnet's* History of the Reformation.

The Church of *England*, tho' first Reform'd, being under the Reign of a young King, he was easily prevail'd with to form the Model of Church-Government in this manner, as having his Eye more at the main Point, *viz.* The rooting out of Idolatry and Superstition, but had not yet had the Episcopal Hierarchy debated, or its Scriptural Authority call'd in Question.

As to Queen *Elizabeth*, she rather went back in the Reformation of Ceremonies, than forward in destroying them; for which two Reasons are assign'd by the Writers of that Age.

1. Policy, That by the preserving some similitude
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to the old Rites, she might, if possible, bring the Papists to comply with her way, and so prevent a Division.

2. Her natural Gayness of Temper, which enclin'd her to be much in Love with the Pomp and shows of Religion

In King *James* the first, a new and unheard of Doctrine started into the World, found first in the Heads of his Flatterers, That Kings were immediately clothed with their Power from above ; that they Govern'd *Jure Divino*, and consequently must be obeyed as God's Ordinance, and without any Controul.

I shall not run into the dark Particulars of that wretched Doctrine, nor the Mischiefs it brought upon both Nations ; but having assign'd the proper Original, both of Prelacy and Ceremonies, the two great things now debated, I shall proceed to examine what has been the Consequence of these things in these Kingdoms.

And *First*, I must own they brought immediate Contention into the Reformed Churches, and afterwards all the Divisions, Schisms some call them, and Debates that have been in the World, since their Foundation.

There were indeed early Differences in the Reformed Churches in *England*, and Bishop *Hooper*, and Bishop *Ridley* contended a little too warmly ; on both sides, till Affliction and Suffering taught both of them more Charity ; and when they came both to die for the Essentials of Religion, it taught them to own, the Root of Religion might be found, where the Blossom had not the same fragrance ; that Faith, Hope, Love, and other Christian Graces might be preserved, where they differed in the Circumstances.

However, I believe no Man will Dispute with me, that the very Bishops themselves in those Times were Good Men ; of Holy and Blameless Lives, sound and wholesome Doctrine ; constant and laborious in Preaching, of firm and unshaken Faith, of invincible Fortitude
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in the Cause of Christ, and sealed the Reformation with their Blood ; and tho' I am as far from Episcopacy in my Opinion as any Man in *Scotland*, yet must I do Justice. These were Bishops, of whom five, besides Arch-Deacon *Philpot*, past the Fiery Trial, and laid down their Lives in the Glorious Cause of Religion.

These were not dumb Dogs, but zealous Teachers of the Good People, and having taught Christ first, they died for him afterwards : A thing easier to talk of than to do.

In Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, the *Regale* and *Pontificate* continuing still in the Church, Bishops and Ceremonies reserv'd their Legal Sanction, or Confirmation rather ; but as the World began to increase in Knowledge, and Light spread it self further than usual ; so People began to be much out of Love with the Pomp of Service, as with a thing remote from the true Institution of the Gospel ; and tho' several Acts of Parliament were made against them, yet their Number increased every Day ; the Queen indeed proceeded very severely with them, to reclaim them : And King *James*, tho' bred up under another kind of Church-Government himself, carry'd it yet higher.

But as force never yet could be effectual over Religion ; so all these Proceedings serv'd but to make the persecuted People encrease.

Their Original, and I must own, I think a most just Objection, was, that the Church required a yet farther Reformation, that it was their Duty to serve God in the way which was most agreeable to the Scriptures, and they having disliked several things in the Ceremonies and Liturgy of the Church of *England*, pressed for a greater Purity of Worship : Hence they were called PURITANS.

The Holiness and Blamelesness of their Lives, the Inoffensiveness of their Behaviour to all Persons, and the General Character they had, was such, that the Name
first

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first given them in Derision, was afterwards in great Honour, both at home, and especially among the Protestant Churches abroad ; and *Erasmus*, who was in *England* at that time, and convers'd with them ; gave his Opinion of them in this noble Epression,, *Sit anima mea cum Puritannis Anglicanis.*

Yet even these Puritans, than whom *Europe* never shew'd better Christians, remain'd in the Communion of the Church of *England*, and in Subjection to *Episcopacy*

The Reason they gave for it was, that tho' they could not join in many things of their Worship, yet they thought it their Duty not to separate, and make a Breach or Schism in the Church.

Note, for I desire to be rightly understood, I do not say it was their Duty not to separate, but they were convinc'd of its being their Duty, and so it might become a Duty to them.

And that it was apparently thus, appear'd afterward, even that when their Kings put that abominable Book of Sports upon them, for which all the most Godly and Pious Ministers were deprived ; yet they did not gather separate Churches, they went about, Preaching, Catechizing, and Instructing private Families ; but they neither Baptized nor Administred the Lord's Supper, but their People conform'd in that to the Establish'd Church.

If 'tis enquir'd why I observe this, 'tis because,

1. I would note with what force and unwillingness the Dissenters in *England* have been driven to be Dissenters, and as it were, thrust out of the Church.
2. Because of a like backwardness to separate, which appear'd at the last juncture in 1661, which some Censure the Dissenters, I think too severely, for.

But to return to the Puritans :

The Government being resolv'd to push them upon all Extremities, and put every thing upon them that they knew they would not comply with, an Opportunity

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nity offer'd to try whether it was meerly for the sake of Persecution and Oppression, that they were thus us'd, or whether being really affraid of them, their general Absence would have been grateful to them.

For the Discovery of a Planting in the North part of *America*, call'd *New England*, happening about this time, they petition King *James* for Leave to go over and plant themselves there——; which not to enter here into the Circumstances of their Address, or its Reception, tho' the History of it is very diverting, was granted them.

Immediately the whole Kingdom was in motion, and nothing was to be seen, but hiring Ships, packing up Goods, selling Estates, Jewels, Household Stuff, and Equipages, as if the whole Nation was going to transplant.

The first Families that went, met with terrible Severity in Cold, Famine, and want of all things, particularly of Habitations, in a barren uncultivated Wilderness; but what will not People suffer for the Liberty of their Consciences? Not discourag'd by the Distresses they went thro', they went on, and were follow'd by such Multitudes, and with such Wealth, that if I remember right, above 19000 People were found to have gone over in a very few Years; and so generally were they bent upon it, that the Council had it several times under debate to stop them.

But King *James* dying, and the Confusions of the next Reign coming on, the Civil Wars broke out, and the Power of the Parliament prevailing, the Principle before mentioned, of Purity in Worship, obtained on the Nation, Episcopacy was wholly suppress'd, and a new Form of Church Government erected.

This not only Establish'd Liberty to all the Puritans, and put a stop to their flying Abroad, but the Scriptures with the Pattern of the Primitive Churches, being the Rule of their Establishment, a General Assembly of Divines was call'd, who sat at *Westminster*——; what their

their Proceedings were, how they entertain'd a Brotherly Correspondence with the Assembly in this Country, how they unhappily divided again into different Opinions, the Contests about the *Jus Divinum* of Church-Government, and of their manner in particular ; these are things too long to enter upon here, and something Foreign to my Purpose also.

But to come as fast as possible to the present Times ; At the Restoration of the Monarchy of King *Charles II.* this whole Fabrick, so it seem'd good to the Almighty, fell at once, and the Episcopal Hierarchy, Liturgy, Ceremonies, &c. were restored.

The King, whether sincerely desirous to unite his Subjects, if possible, or not, is needless to determine here, the Consequence best explain'd his Meaning ; but however, in pretence and outside he call'd it, appoints a Conference at the *Savoy*, and granted a Commission to certain on both sides, to treat of an Accommodation of Differences.

The Ministers gladly accept of this Conference, and principally being made to believe that Concessions being made on on their side, like Concessions would be made on the other, and it might be possible to prevent a Breach in the whole.

They then had several Meetings among themselves, to consider how far they might comply, and as they all thought it their Duty to go as far as possible : So the Latitude of some People went farther than others.

I shall not Justifie or Condemn here, it is not my present Business ; I shall readily own some Men went farther than any Body of the Dissenters in *England* would go now, and farther than they themselves would ever after have gone again.

They offer'd to submit to a Superintendency ; or call it what you will, a moderate Episcopacy, and I shall not dispute with any Man, whether they did not offer to go higher than is consistent with a Presbyterian Parity
They

They saw that whole Body going to be rent in Pieces, they saw themselves going to be depriv'd of their Ministerial Function, and rendred incapable of doing the Good they were dedicated to, and they thought it their Duty to go as far as possible to avoid the greater Evils they saw before them, to themselves, the Church of God, and the Power of Religion in general.

Let those that please to condemn their Latitude, take it in what Sense they think fit, I readily grant all that is Matter of Fact in their Concession, and which Mr. *Baxter* has at large given an Account of in the History of his Life.

I shall not examine how far the present Body of the Dissenters are affected by it, or are to be censur'd for it, or are any way concern'd in it; and I wave it here for that Reason.

The Concessions of the Dissenters being deliver'd in, the King told them, *He was well pleased they agreed to the Essence of Episcopacy*; and renew'd his Assurances to them of his earnest Desire of an Accommodation.

What the Treatment they met with from the Church Party upon these Concessions was, is very remarkable and might put it out of any bodies thought ever to apprehend a Conjunction.

Their Concessions being rejected, the Ministers were immediately put to the Test of their Fidelity; and 't is remarkable, that of all these that offer'd their Concessions, very few, if any, conform'd; above 3000 of the best, most Learned, and Pious of the Ministers, and who enjoy'd the largest Benefices, rejected the Office of Bishopricks and Preferment, and quitted their Living, because they could not comply.

And thus the Episcopal Hierarchy was again re-established in *England*—; several Persecutions of the Dissenters follow'd in the times of King *Charles II.* the Rigor and Cruelty of which are standing Testimonies, that they are very far from being Episcopally inclin'd.

Sever

Several Acts of Parliament have been since made to render them as uneasie as possible, as the Act of Uniformity, I mean the Amendments to it, the five Mile Act, the *& cetera* Oath, the Sacramental Test, and others.

But the Gentlemen on that side have seen their Error, and even these we call High-Church Men, are now forwardest to make Concessions to the Dissenters, in order to bring them into the Church—; what their Design is, he must be blinder than I will suppose any of my Readers to be, that does not see; but they do the Dissenters this Service in it, to testify for them, that no Concessions will now bring them in, but such as shall bring the Worship and Discipline of the Church down to the Test of the Scriptures—, and this farther clears them of all Suspicion of being Episcopally inclin'd.

And thus I have brought the Church of *England* part of this Discourse down to the latter Times of King *Charles II.*

At his Death the Successor was a Papist, and the first Step he took, was to face about to the Dissenters, and by the gloss of Charity, and general Justice, court them to his Party, giving them Liberty, but on the foot of his Prerogative, not the Laws, to draw them into the Snares of, at least, a tacit Acknowledging his Right to do so.

The Generality of the Dissenters saw the Hook thro' this Bait, and tho' they accepted their Liberty, and carry'd it dutifully to their Sovereign; yet they profess'd their Dissatisfaction at having it given in an Unparliamentary manner.

Upon which these Famous Lines were made, which every Body had in their Prints and Discourse.

*The Declaration's but a Trojan Horse,
The Form's illegal, and the Matter's worse.*

Some indeed were drawn into the Snares of Addressing, tho' they were generally oppos'd by the best and greatest

greatest part of the Dissenters, and those that did it thank'd him for the Liberty indeed, yet were ignorant, both in the Design, and unbelieving in the Consequences, as appear'd in that, as soon as their Eyes were opened, they started back, and testified their Concern for having been drawn in so far ; of which presently.

This also farther appear'd, in that, when the King, who thought he had gain'd one Point, was for pushing at another, viz. the taking off the Penal Laws and Test ; the Dissenters, tho' they had suffered so deeply, and these Penal Laws were both wicked in their Nature, and particularly pointed at them ; yet they generally rejected it, and declar'd they had rather be oppress'd by the Church of *England*, than to have both the Church of *England* and themselves too, torn to pieces by Popery, or those Laws invaded by the dispensing Power of the Prince ; nor could all King *James* his Booted Apostles bring them off from this.

In the Sense of this the Church of *England*, and the Dissenters made that famous Capitulation, on which the inviting over the Prince of *Orange*, afterwards the Glorious Restorer of *Britain's* Liberty, was built, and which is express'd in the Eighth Article of the Memorial to that Prince, on the Performance of which Treaty, the Establishment of the Church of *England*, and the Toleration of the Dissenters, are equally built, and supported by Right, Truth, and Fundamental Law, and thus they both stand at this Day.

I come now to the Reformation of the Church of *Scotland* ; which beginning later than that of *England*, by about Twelve Years, and having no Bonds of Tyranny upon them, which as I have noted, drew *England* into the Snare of the Regale ; but their Reformation being made by the People themselves, and Mr. *John Knox* being their *Calvin*, and who sent or went to *Geneva*, on purpose to concert the best Grounds of a National Settlement, they had nothing imposed upon them, nor any Body to impose it. The

The Lords which headed them, referr'd the whole Settlement of Religion to the Ministers; they had the Mischiefs *England* was fallen into by a partial and pompous Reformation before their Eyes, and thus they reform'd at once into the compleat Model, both as to Discipline and Worship, which we find at this day.

Nor were they so dark in their Foresight, as not to expect all the Rage and Opposition the Enemies of such a Reformation could be gully of, and to secure the People therefore as far as possible, in the strict Adherence to the mighty Work they were engag'd in, they contriv'd the most Solemn, Awful and Tremendous Obligation, that I believe, any Nation ever bound themselves in, since the Oath of God, which *Moses* made the Children of *Israel* take at *Mount Horeb*.

This is what they call the National Covenant, in which the People bind themselves and their Posterity, in the most solemn manner to God Almighty, to adhere to, maintain and defend to the utmost of their Power, the Reformation they had settled, the Doctrine, Discipline and Government of the Church, as express'd in their Confession of Faith, and several other Articles both of Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitution therein express'd, needless, and too long to be repeated here.

This Covenant was made first in the Year, 1581, the new Reformation being then threatned with many Enemies, as well Foreign as Domestick,——and it was renewed again, in the Year 1590.

I am far from raising the least Scruple at, or making any Reflection upon the Nature, the Cause, the Manner, or Obligation of this Covenant, or any Branch of it; they that construe me so, do it to cover the Shame of the other ill Treatment which I have daily from them.

I frankly own it a solemn and most just Obligation, and declare I never meant in any thing I said or printed, the least Reflection against it; and 'tis very just I should have the explaining my own words.

If what I have said any where, gives a seeming Reflection, I should very sorry, for the sake of them that may ignorantly mistake me; as for those that maliciously and wilfully mistake me, they are worth no Honest Man's Notice, nor is it on their account in the least, that I take notice of it here; but to disabuse those who are imposed upon by such.

I freely recognize the National Covenant, and what I said, in the sixth Essay, of our Fathers eating these sowre Grapes, and us their Children's Teeth set on edge by them. I wonder any Man should be so unjust as to turn my words to a Meaning, That the Covenant is a sowre Grape that sets the Childrens Teeth on Edge. I therefore declare it to be only brought as an Allusion to those People who load themselves with more Obligations in their Notions of the Covenant, than the Covenant really imposes upon them, ——— and the Sense of the place in which 'tis brought, will allow me this to any impartial Person.

I was proving that the National Covenant is not at all concern'd in the Union; I acknowledge first, that the Covenant is binding to Posterity, and I add, that, for Argument sake, I'll grant; *whether I believe it or no*, it has all that Obligation they alledge, *let that be what it will*, ——— signifying thereby, they do reckon greater Obligations than really are in the Covenant, and this I call eating sowre Grapes, 6th Essay, P. 20. and this I leave to any impartial Censure.

If this be not Satisfaction to any Honest Man, that I have not the least Disrespect for the National Covenant, I shall on any reasonable Sentence of indifferent Judges, make such more solemn Declaration or Acknowledgment, as they can desire.

But to go on with my History of the Reformation in Scotland, there was a great Difference in it from what had been in England; for here it was made perfectly, without the Assistance, and contrary to the Intension of the Sovereign,

reign,—— and the Regale therefore found no Body to espouse it, but the Reformers had opportunity to make their Model as compleat as they could.

I know it has been objected, that in the Infancy of the Reformation, they found the very Essence of Episcopacy necessary, and that was in the Superintendents named in the *Church Policy*, one of the first Instruments of Settlement devised for their Church, the Model of which had been brought from *Geneva* by Mr. *John Knox*, and some have raised Pleas from hence for the Prelatick Power, as the most Original Institution, and the like of the Common Prayers.

But the Bishops would be ill pleased to be no other kind of Bishops than those were, who tho' they had a Diocess indeed, yet were subject to be deposed by the ordinary Ministers of their own Bounds, and therefore I do not bring this to justify Prelacy, but to relate as near as I can, the Fact as it lies, and the Use of it shall appear presently.

The Superintendents indeed had their Diocesses prescribed, and 'tis call'd by that very Name, and they had power to plant Ministers, settle Churches, and do several things, which at that time could not be done without them; but I must always insist upon their Subjection as a Clause that Chocks all the Efforts to prove the first Reformation Episcopal.

However, they were Superintendents, and therefore some kind of Superintendency may not be inconsistent with Presbyterian Parity, and that's all the Use I shall make of it.

I find another Instance of this, which serves the present Occasion, and that is a Letter written in the Year --- from the Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*, to the Bishops in *England*, and in a different Stile from what we write here now; and the Letter begins thus.

" The Superintendents, Ministers and Commissioners of
" the Church within the Realm of *Scotland* to their
Brethren

“ Brethren the Bishops and Pastors in England, who
 “ have renounced the Roman Antichrist, and have
 “ professed with us the Lord Jesus.

Here is something very remarkable, and without noting.

1. That the Church of Scotland esteem'd, even the Bishops and Pastors in those days, as Brethren professing with them the Lord Jesus, a quite different Language from those who stile them *Dumb Dogs*, poor *Rogues*, &c. Indecencies, which must be offensive to modest Ears, were the Case much worse than it is.
2. The Church of Scotland was as far from owning Episcopacy it self, then as now, and in the very Letter, they exclaim against the Pomp and Ceremonies of Worship; but it did not at all break off their Charity from the Persons of the Bishops and Pastors, whom they still call'd Brethren, and own'd they profess'd with them the Lord Jesus.
3. The Appellation of Brethren was most just, for that the

Bishops in those days, tho' Prelates, vested with Civil Power, wearing the Habit, and every way practising their Church Power as now, yet were Holy and worthy Christians, and of the same Class with *Cranmer*, *Ridly*, *Latimer*, *Farrar*, and Blessed *Hooper*, who all of them sealed the Reformed Religion with their Blood, and durst pass to the Stake and the Flames in maintaining the true Protestant Faith, against that *Roman Antichrist* here mentioned.

Let no Man suspect me here of favouring Episcopacy; for tho' of late Years, some of the Men have been a Scandal to the Office; yet I profess, were the Bishops *Now* all *Hoopers* and *Crammers*, I could not agree to their Church Government: However, I cannot call it a damning Error; certainly a Bishop may go to Heaven, or else our want of Charity must be great for the Martyrs; I am therefore

therefore for letting them alone, so far, I mean, as respects Civil Treatment, and fair Usage——; 'tis enough the Church of *Scotland* is fenced against them by Law, and the Debt of common Civility is due to all the World.

In like manner we find the Church of *Scotland* using a Liturgy in former Times—— I shall not infer that she ought to be distrusted on that Score, as likely to relapse into it.

But this I shall observe, that Liturgies unimposed, have always been in use in the Church, even from the first 300 Years, and therefore are not so frightful as some People make them, and the Directory is a Liturgy in its kind; all the Reformed Churches have Liturgies, and all that could be desir'd in that Case, by the Dissenters in 1661 was. 1. That they be reformed. And 2dly. That they be not imposed.

To prove that a Liturgy and Common Prayer were used in *Scotland*, take the following Instances.

1. In the Church-Policy mention'd before, we have these words; *In great Towns, we think it expedient, that every day there be either Sermon or Common Prayer.* And again, *On the day of the publick Sermon, we do not think the Common Prayer needful to be used.*

2. In the Directory for the publick Worship in *Scotland*, we have this Introduction or Preface:

“ In the beginning of this Blessed Reformation,
 “ our Wise and Pious Ancestors took care to set
 “ forth an Order for Redress of many things, which
 “ they then, by the Word, discovered to be Vain,
 “ Erroneous, Superstitious and Idolatrous in the
 “ publick Worship of God.— *This occasioned ma-*
 “ *ny Godly and Learned Men to rejoice much in the*
 “ *Book of Common Prayer at that time set forth.*

The Summ of all this, is not all to favour either Episcopacy or Liturgy in their Attempts to be either justified or restored in *Britain*; let no Man mistake me, but to do Justice against furious Censurers, who at the same time, that

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the Nations professing both sorts, are going to unite, endeavour to represent them as meer Popery and Heathenism, that the Dissenters in *England* may be the easier Censured for Offers of Compliance with them, and this I profess to be my single Reason for giving these Instances; as for those who will have me mean what I never intend, I leave them to their own ways, and condemn their want of Candour.

'Tis enough the Church of *Scotland* is reform'd from this, all the Burthens of Ceremony, Forms and Hierarchies are taken away, and Purity in both Worship and Discipline obtained; but there is a Christian Temper and Charity towards the Church of *England* certainly due, who, tho' not so far reform'd, are yet our Brethren, and of whom we yet hope and ought to pray that they shall one day be effectually Illuminated; this Temper and Charity, I hope, shall now increase on an Union, and that all the Contention shall be to out-preach, out-live, and out-practise one another, emulating, and thereby provoking one another to Love, and to good Works.

But to go back to the Church of *Scotland*, the several Convulsions she has felt by the Interposition of Tyranny, Conquest, and sometimes Episcopacy, are to be seen at large in the Historys of both Kingdoms, and I shall not enter upon them.

The Persecutions of the honest suffering Inhabitants are a melancholly Testimony of the Assaults the Devil and his Agents have made upon the Reformation here, the Courage, Constancy and vigorous Opposition of the zealous Confessors of Christ and his Church in this Nation deserve a better Historian, and one less a Stranger to *Scotland* than I am, to record, and call for more Leisure, and more Room than I have in this small Tract; and I therefore leave them with this Remark, That no Nation in the World has with more Zeal and Fidelity opposed all the Impositions, Innovations and Barbarities of the Enemies of Truth, than this Nation; and more I cannot say here.

Under

Under these suffering Circumstances, they continued, with some short Intervals, till their being incorporated with *England* in the time of *Oliver Cromwel*, when tho' they seem'd to be under a Military Government; yet they had their Representatives in Parliament, were taxed but in Proportion to the Representative; and as I am inform'd here, their Subjection, such as it was, was attended with an Encrease of Wealth, Trade and Property.

At the Restoration, they had Episcopacy, Tyranny and Superstition restor'd just as in *England*; Ministers that could not conform, turn'd out, silenced, persecuted, fin'd, banish'd, imprison'd *mutatis mutandis*, just as in *England*, except only that their Cruelties and Inhumanities here went farther than they did there.

Thus they continu'd till the Revolution, at the happy coming of the Great Deliverer of the whole Island, King *William*; when Tyranny fled, and Guilt drew in her blushing Countenance; Law, Truth, Justice and Liberty reviving, the Church of *Scotland* obtained a Resurrection from a hundred Years of Misery, Uncertainty and Distress.

Then Episcopacy again vanish'd in its turn, and its Elder Sister Tyranny, abdicated with her; the Presbyterian Government of the Church was restor'd to its Primitive Freedom, and to the full Exercise and Extent of all its Legal Rites, as it is this day, and thus far relates to the History of both Churches.

I come now to the Dissenters in *England*, as the third Class of People, I am to enter upon.

Of the Dissenters in England.

I left them ejected, contemn'd, persecuted, and oppress'd during the Reign of the late King *Charles*; wheedled and amused, under his Brother King *James*, restored and tolerated under King *William*; and yet farther secured of that Liberty, tho' under several Invasions, by

the Vigilance of the House of Lords, and the Honour, Justice and special Favour of Her present Majesty, whose Concern for them, Clemency and Justice to them, and free Adherence to their compleat Toleration, I hope they will never forget.

Here I desire to speak something to the Matter of dissenting from the Church of *England* in general, and then to the Endeavours of Reconciliation on both sides; and I hope that the true stating the Matter of Fact, will clear up all the Doubts People may entertain on both sides without Invectives, personal Reproaches, Raillery, or ill Treatment of the Parties, with which I shall no ways concern my self.

I have deduc'd the Dissenters from the Church of *England*, from them they came out, the Reason of their dissenting, I have confin'd to one main Head, viz. *Purity of Worship*, which was the first; subsequent Scruples follow'd indeed, which were levell'd at, what I call the *Regale and Pontificate*, the Supremacy of Civil Power, and the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy.

These drove them out of the Church, *and these only*; for as to Doctrinal Articles, they are allow'd to be Orthodox, and all the Dissenters frankly subscribe them, the Quakers excepted, and the last Clause of the 27th Article to the Anabaptists.

It being objected by some, That *Offers have been made by the Dissenters to come into the Church*, I desire to speak directly to it, only to premise something, which I think necessary in this place, relating to the Church of *England* her self.

1. The Dissenters, in their separating from the Church of *England*, do by no means disown her being a true Church, they charge her with no *Doctrinal Error*, nothing Heretical or Antichristian, I mean *as a Church*.

2. No Man can be so void of Charity as to judge that a Man adhering to the Church of *England*, and whose *Conscience is not farther enlightened*, cannot be saved.

3. No

3. No Man then can deny, but that the Dissenters in *England* would *gladly come into the Church of England*, and become one Body with them again, and ought to do so, would they abate, alter, or remove all those things in which they differ from them, which do not appear warranted by the Word of God.

This being laid down, it will follow,

1. That a simple Offer of complying with the Church, can be no matter of Charge against the Dissenters, if the Conditions on which they offer it are thus qualified.
2. Those that have offered more, are not to be justified, nor shall not by me; and those that have not, ought not to be condemn'd for the Mistakes of their Brethren, and a just Distinction shall be the Work before me.

I come then to speak to the Matter of Fact, as some have alledged it, that the Dissenters in *England* have made Offers to conform to the Church of *England*——; I *readily grant it is true*, and I think I may as readily grant all that has been said upon that Head, which amounts to this, and no more, That some of the Dissenting Ministers at the Conference at the *Savoy*, and before at *Breda*, willing, if possible, to avoid a Breach, and keep the Office of their Ministry, did offer to submit to a moderate Episcopacy, or as the King himself call'd it, *owned the Essence of Episcopacy*.

I'll grant, that the Latitude of some of their Principles, and the particular extensive Charity of others, and the Circumstances of the whole at that time, carry'd them farther than would consist with the Presbyterian Parity now insisted on by both Churches.

Nay, I'll grant more than is asked, and I perceive, more than some People desire I should grant, viz. That they went farther than themselves, when they saw farther into it, would afterwards agree to, and a great deal more than others of their Brethren, even, at that time, would comply with.

But

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But I make no question to prove here, that there can be no just Argument drawn from hence, to prove that the Dissenters now in *England*, should be charged with the same Compliance, or distrusted on the Account of what then past. — But on the contrary, that there are very good Demonstrations to prove they would by no means comply with any such thing; and that the dissenting in *England*, and in *Scotland*, is on the same Foundation with one another, and no other.

The Debate therefore of the Compliance in 1661, I take to be at an end here; *Because I grant all that can be alledged on that Head*, I neither justify nor approve the Concessions offered, tho' at the same time the other Party alledged they were no Concessions at all, but what were destructive to Episcopacy, and, as they call'd it, a Plot against it.

I must own, I think, That suppose the Compliance of those Men as sinful as we please, they were Great and Good Men, they are dead, and gone to their Rest, and their Works follow them; their Labours remain standing Monuments of their Worth and Excellence, and seem to merit that their Infirmities should be buried in the Grave with them.

Let any Minister in *Britain* first make it appear, that he has been blest with being made the Instrument of the Conversion, restoring and comforting as many Souls, as *Mr. Baxter's Call to the Unconverted*, his *Saints everlasting Rest*, and *Mr. How's Blessedness of the Righteous*, and he shall pass with me for the greatest Blessing of his kind, that God has left us in this Day.

Works of this Value deserve their Savour in the Hearts of all good Christians, and if some Opinions of these Men do not agree with ours; yet Charity ought to restrain our Censures of such Men, as God has made eminently useful in his Church, at least let us abstract the Good, and let the Bad sleep, that what we dislike may not prejudice the Minds of those who may receive Good from the other.

This

This I think is a Christian way of dealing with them and they that reflect most upon their own Miscarriages and Failings will be aptest to allow for other People, the rest is all Cavil and indecent.

Having yielded thus to the utmost, I am now to prove that the Dissenters in *England* are not of the same Mind now, and would on no account go the same length; the Consequence of which will be plain, that they are not to be censur'd or distrusted for what was then done.

I confess my Absence from Books and Vouchers in *England*, deprives me of some Helps, but I must work with such Tools as I have; and tho' my Performance may not be so perfect as otherwise it would be; yet I hope it shall be convincing, and any moderate Person will allow for the Disadvantage of meer Memory.

First, I have living Testimony now in this place, who have heard most, if not all the Dissenting Ministers of *England* that have been here, declare in their own Names, and on account of their Brethren in *England*, that it is the general Opinion of the Dissenters in *England*, That if the Church of *England* would abate their whole Liturgy, Habits, Ceremonies, &c. yet that they could not conform meerly on Account of Episcopacy; and if it shall be of any weight to add my own Testimony, I declare I have heard them Universally profess the same thing in *England*.

But to come farther, let's take the Testimony of Enemies, which is no ill way of coming at a charge; the Author of the *Regale and Pontificate*, a pretended Advocate for the Episcopal Hierarchy in *England*, charging the Dissenters with their rejecting all Offers of Compliance made from the Church, concludes thus, 'Tis impossible that any Union can be made between the Church and them; because they refuse the REGALE and PONTIFICATE, and on this he charges them with incurable Schism.

The Author of the *Wolf strip'd*, one of this Country Men, and no ill Scholar, inviting, or rather challenging the

the Dissenters to the stating their Scruples before the Convocation, in order to a Reconciliation, has these words—*We should have little Quarrel with the Dissenters about all the Objections they make as to Habit, Ceremonies, Liturgy, and even the grand Point of Ordination by Presbyters, if it was not for their Schism, and gathering separate Congregations, in Opposition to the true Episcopal Authority of the Church.*

Here's Liturgy, Ceremonies, Habits, and almost every thing sacrific'd to the Dissenters, BUT EPISCOPACY; and why did they not accept the Challenge, but because the *Main and Material thing* was behind, without which there could be no Compliance, viz. Episcopal Hierarchy.

What is the Compliance of Mr. Baxter, &c. to these things? What was then done, is near 50 Years ago, and the State of things is somewhat altered since that time; for 'tis otherwise now.

And here I think it will be proper to remind the Dissenters Enemies, or those that *distrust them* on this account, with that many headed Monster call'd A COMPREHENSION, which some People—— *in the Abundance of their Ignorance*, have charged the Dissenters with contriving.

I believe the Challenge may very modestly be made in the Name of all the Dissenters in *England* to any Man, to prove that a Comprehension had ever its Rise among them, or that any Dissenter ever closed with it.

I know Bishop *Usher's Model* was the famous Foundation, and several Dissenters, I believe, at that time, might have come into that.

But even that Model was far from a *Comprehension*, and when ever the word Comprehension came to be consider'd, and brought down to *the Edge of Practice*, it was always found impracticable, and therefore the aforesaid Author of the *Regale and Pontificate* declares an Union between the Church and the Dissenters, impossible; because the Dissenters will not come up to Episcopacy.

I know some People are forward to tell us there is a Project in *England* now, of making Abatements to the Dissenters to bring them in : I shall give a short Answer to it, If it be to take away the *Regale* and *Pontificate*, they will accept it, for that is not coming into the Church, but receiving the Church into us ; if it be only as formerly, to abate rigorous Exacting of Conformity, I pledge the Value of all I have said upon it,

1. That 'tis a high Church Project.

2. That the Dissenters reject it.

Now, I would fain ask those Gentlemen that fear the Dissenters and the Church of *England* should unite, who of the Church, the Dissenters should be most likely to join with ; the *High Church* or the *Low Church* ? The *Low Church-Men* do not seek it, for they are willing to give, the Dissenters all the Liberty and Toleration they desire, knowing they cannot come in ; as to the *High Church*, I believe no body will suspect the Dissenters of coming over to them.

But here's another Question will be harder to decide still : How comes it to pass, that the *High Church-Men* quarrel with the *Low-Church-Men* on this Head, and charge them with shifting the Cause of the Schism off from themselves, telling them, they are not so willing to yield in indifferent things to the Dissenters, as they are ? To prove this, the same Author quoted before, inviting the Dissenters to offer their Demands to the Convocation, and telling them indifferent things will be given up to them, has these words.

' And if they will do this, it will soon appear whether the High or Low Church will go farthest to purchase the desir'd Reconciliation, and which of them do in most earnest wish for it.

' Next, says the same Author, Let those of the Low Church, who make such Boasts of their Project for Reconciliation, produce the Terms of it, that it may appear they were none but indifferent things that were to
' be

' be given up, otherways let them too, cease their railing at the High Church Men for suspecting them.

' The High Church desire that they and the Low Church may be try'd by their Actions,——thus you see an Alternative, the Low Church are suspected by the High Church of giving up all, or giving up none, and Comprehensions and Abatements, &c. are all offered on the High Church Mens side.

The Reason is plain; They see an effectual Gate, to the Ruine of the Dissenters in making Division among them, by yielding in part,——but are mortally averse to giving up the substantial or effectual Articles, which once removed, would bring an Universal Conjunction.

If I am ask'd here in general, whether we would on any terms join at all with them. I answer, and believe all good Christians will answer, *Yes, with all our Hearts,*——and so will the Church of *Scotland* too.

And as 'tis natural to say in the next Question, What are the Conditions, Truly such as on the Foundation of which, we would all join with the Papists, or any Church in the World, and I hope, no body will take Offence at the General way of expressing it; for 'tis not stepping forward, but receiving those that step forward to us.

If any Christian Church will abate what is either in their Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline, not warranted by the Word of God, I'll readily say, we shall all join with that Church. *But to come to Particulars,* as this is not the first time that Question has been ask'd and answer'd, I'll give five Heads which have been offer'd to the Church in this Case by the Dissenters, and on which, I believe, the Church of *Scotland*, the Church of *England*, and the Dissenters, should soon be one united Body, and these are long since made publick in several Tracts, particularly in an Answer to the High Church Challenge, Printed in the Year 1704.

1. That as to Liturgies, they may suffer such Amendment and Alterations as are justifiable by Scripture and the Practice of the Primitive Church.
2. That when they are so amended, they may not be imposed, or the Minister ty'd up, and prescrib'd by the Letter of the Book, but be at liberty to enlarge or abridge as his own Abilities may supply, or the Case require.
3. That Ordination of Ministers be establish'd in the Presbyters, and no Re-ordination or unreasonable Oaths imposed.
4. That Habits and Ceremonies, such as Kneeling at the Sacrament, bowing at the Name of Jesus, the Cross in Baptism, the Surplice, Vestments, and all the rest, scrupled by the Dissenters, and own'd to be indifferent, may be wholly left out, or left at the Discretion of the People, as they may not be impos'd upon them without their Consent.
5. That Church Government be reduced to such a pitch of Authority, and vested in such Persons as may be justified by the Scriptures, and no other.

In all these Offers, I do not see the least Tendency towards a Compliance with any thing, either in Discipline, or Worship, which the Church of *Scotland* would not agree to, or that can render the Dissenters suspected; I do not say these are all the things to be insisted on, and let no Man take that weak hold by the Barrenness of Expression to suggest a corrupt Meaning; but I think there is nothing the Church of *England* can be ask'd, but what is contain'd fairly in these Generals.

On the Conceding therefore these five Heads, the Dissenters, yea, and the Church of *Scotland* too, might very easily close with the General Union, and become one great Protestant; and purely Reformed Church, for it would be one Presbyterian Church.

Upon

Upon the whole, the Matter of Fact I think is plain, that the grand Difference between the Church of *England* and the Dissenters, at this time, is just the same as in *Scotland*, and no other; I mean Church Government, or, in the High Church Language, *the Regale and Pontificate*, and all the Dispute in both may be said to turn upon two Points.

1. Episcopal Hierarchy.
2. The Supremacy of the Civil Magistrate, or his Power to Impose indifferent Things, and thereby to make them necessary.

This is the Sum of the Matter, and most of it lies in the first Head too; For, were the Hierarchy reduced, 'tis plain, the Church would soon give up the rest: And, as the Author before Quoted observes, *Would have little Dispute about Habits, Ceremonies, Liturgies and Ordination*: They are indeed but the Pomp and Jingle of the other, and the Scripture-Rule would soon reduce them to Primitive Plainness.

I know the Nicety of the Subject I am writing upon, and the want of Charity with which some will read, and this forces me to frequent and otherwise needless Excursions.

I hope I retain an Air of Integrity in my Meaning, and for Misconstructions, *especially wilful ones*, I dispise them: I see nothing in my Discourse, that should make me be suspected of being Episcopally inclin'd.—Tho' I cannot be for Sealing all that are of an Episcopal Church to Reprobation.—Not treating them as Antichristian: I believe the Hierarchy Unscriptural, and enter my publick Protest against both *Regale and Pontificate*.—And I think this is as much as any Christian can be requir'd.—But I cannot call the Church of *England* Antichristian, because neither *Regale* or *Pontificate* are Essentials of Doctrine, and when ever they shall be quitted by them, they are from that time the same individual Reform'd Presbyterian Church with this in *Scotland*.

Some

Some have taken pains to prove, that the Dissenters in England, *I desire to be understood of the Dissenters, the Presbyterian Dissenters, except where I explain it otherwise,* declare themselves now for moderate Episcopacy———/ But this can never be prov'd upon them; Nor does Mr. Calamy any where suggest it, that I remember, if he says, *No Body questioned the Lawfulness of it at the Conference at the Savoy*; it does not amount to a Proof, that they allow'd the Lawfulness of it, much less that they do so now.

But then I find 'tis objected, That they Sign the 37th Article of the Church of England, which Recognizes the *Regale*, or Power of the Civil Authority: But he that Quotes the Words of that Article, and leaves out the Explanation with which they Sign it, does not act the most candid part of a Reconciler, nor Treat them fairly.

'Tis known, that the Explication is made part of that Article, and with that Explication the Dissenters are satisfied; and satisfied, that they do not own the Supremacy of the Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Matters, *farther than all the Protestant Churches in Europe do.*

Again, This cannot be brought as a single Argument to distrust the Presbyterian Dissenters, *if it be any Proof at all, 'tis against the whole Body*; For even the Anabaptists Sign that Article, as well as the Presbyterians, and no Man ever suspected them of owning the Supremacy.

Lastly, *And which is more than all the rest,* the Church her self is come off from the *Regale* in General, and the Oath of Supremacy formerly imposed was one of the first things left out of the *English Constitution* at the Revolution, the Act for it repealed, and has never been imposed upon any Body since.

So that I think no Compliyance can be charg'd on the Dissenters in England upon that Foundation.

I have met with but one thing more, in which the Dissenters are attack'd, relating to *Scotland*, and that is, that they set up for a Toleration of Dissenters there.

I must own, I have not the same formidable Opinion of a Toleration here, as some Gentlemen have : And as to the Episcopal Dissenters here, I firmly believe, 'tis the true method to dissolve and reduce them to nothing ; of which hereafter, *but this is nothing to the Case* ; For I see no Proof that the Dissenters in *England* have, one way or other, concern'd themselves in it : And therefore, if any Man charges them on that Head, it ought to be prov'd ; For to say 'tis so, *as far as we know*, is only to make it appear, we know but little or nothing of the Matter.

But to offer at something relating to their Principles in that Case, *it may be noted*, 1. That when Essays at Universal Toleration have been made in *England*, the Dissenters have always oppos'd them ; particularly as in taking off the Penal Laws again Papists, when they chose rather to bear the Unreasonable Burden of those Laws themselves, than to tolerate what was destructive to the General Constitution of the Protestant Religion.

2. Another later Instance is, in a Famous Letter, lately written by Mr. Toland, to the respective Heads of the Dissenters in *England*, pressing them to declare their Opinions of the Universal Liberty of Christians, and the Toleration of all Opinions *meerly Religious* : The Original of which Letter I have here with me, *for it was never printed*, and shall freely show to any Body that desires it.

Upon this Application, back'd with Mr. Stephens and several others — ; the Dissenters meeting and consulting about it, unanimously resolved, not to give any Answer at all to it, or to make any Declaration of their Opinion on that Head — . Now if they have

have thus refused to declare their Opinion in *England*, where accepting Toleration themselves, 'tis most likely they should be for giving it to others, 'tis very unlikely they should officiously declare themselves for it in *Scotland*, where they have nothing at all to do with it.

However to such Objectors, I refer them to my Opinion of that Matter, stated in the Preface to *Jure Divino*, now to be seen in this Town, and which I shall take the Freedom to appeal to.

I think therefore they are free from any of the Reproaches thrown on them on that score.

I find but one thing more objected against them, and that is about their prompting the Dispensing Power of the late King in *England*, by their Addresses of Thanks for an Illegal Indulgence.

This has been directly answer'd already, and is briefly sum'd up thus.

Some few Dissenters did Address and Thank the King for their Liberty, which, *though I do not, nor ever did approve, because that Liberty was their Native Right*; yet as Ignorance, Good Manners, and Willingness to cultivate the Benefit, which they had many Ages mourn'd for want of, moved some, and the prevailing Arts of Court-Flatteries others, yet none of those Addresses being a real owning the Dispensing Power, they cannot be directly charged. And it was plain, they were not design'd as such by the Addressers, since, as soon as they discover'd the Fraud, they all started back, and acknowledg'd the Mistake.

Nor can it be argued, as is weakly insinuated, *That* anking him for an Indulgence, is a Thanking him for a dispensing Power, as that Indulgence was a breaking in on the Laws by a Dispensing Power, because the one is apparent, the other concealed.

That some were drawn in I own, *but to what?* — To Thank the King — Well, *what did they Thank him for?* — For what was *THE EFFECT* of a Dispensing Power? *Note again*, not for the Dispensing Power it self, for they did not foresee it — The *HOOK*, Tyranny, was cover'd with the *BAIT* Liberty, *as in all Ages of the World it has been* — And 'tis Disingenuous to charge that Ignorance as a Sin against Knowledge, and the more so, because as soon as their Eyes were opened, they corrected the Mistake.

Suppose a Man, with a Villainous Design to Murder me, makes me a Present of a Poisoned Nosegay, I accept his Present, and ignorantly thank him for it — But I thank him for the Flowers, I do not thank him for the Poison; But as soon as I discover the Treachery, I throw away the Gift, and prosecute the Murderer.

Again, These People that were thus drawn in, were but a few, not One to Twenty, *some say*, not One to Fifty; and to charge this on the whole Body, looks as if the Enemy had a great Barrenness of Fact, and wants Charity more than it wants Malice.

But I am told very Scholastically, That speaking indefinitely does not imply the whole, and to say *THE DISSENTERS*, may mean but a few, because in School Logick, *an Indefinite in a Matter Contingent, is taken but for a part.*

I forbear any Reflection on the Sophistry of this the Case before us is too honest to need such Equivocations, and plain Reason, with the help of Fact, will clear it up all.

If, to say *THE Dissenters did so*, may signifie but *some of them*; then, if Ten Dissenters did it, it may be said, *The Dissenters did it.*

On the other hand, by the same Rule; If Ten Thousand did not do it, it may be as truly said, *The Dissenters did not do it.*

So by this blessed sort of School Reasoning, it may be true, and very proper to say, the Dissenters *did* it, and the Dissenters *did not* do it, both at the same time.

This is the Art of Reasoning, which I confess my self untaught in, and when I handle a Cause that wants it, I'll go to School to learn it ; but I thank GOD I am defending a Cause and a People, who want nothing but Truth in the plainest Dress to defend them, and a plain Fellow is therefore the fitter to plead for them.

Sincerity is the Glory of a Christian, it makes his Life all of a piece with his Profession: This is the Glory of the Cause of the Dissenters, which is like the People, Plain and Sincere, if they have slipt in any thing, *Humanum est Errare*, but they have fallen like Christians to rise again : And what People in the World has done it less ? In Thirty Years Oppression, they have stood their Ground, they have upheld the Justice of their Non-conformity, till tyr'd with persecuting them, the very Church that oppos'd them has yielded to Truth, and comply'd with their most reasonable Demands.

To charge the Body for the Mistake of a few, is unjust and unfair, and yet I dare say, that the Fact is not right neither, *viz. That they really own'd the Dispensing Power in any one Address*, or any other way countenac'd it than tacitly, and by Consequence without Design.

I could say a great deal to defend their General Behaviour towards the Church.

They have always behaved decently and respectfully, as to a Body of *Fellow Christians*, with whom, *tho' they cannot Conform to their Ecclesiastical Constitution*, they desir'd no Difference in Matters Civil and Neighbourly ; I cannot think any Body will censure them for this——.

They have defended themselves *against their Argument*, but not against their Persons, they have kept their Consciences, but submitted *every thing else* to the Civil Government : Nay, they have gone further, they have not only acquiesc'd in the Civil Government of the Church of *England* Magistracy, but, on all occasions, when Popery and Tyranny have invaded the Church of *England*, they have join'd with them as *their Brethren*, and as Persons embark'd in the same Bottom with them, both as to Civil and Religious Interests.

When the late King *caress'd the Dissenters*, when he used all possible Artifice to draw them in to side with him against the Church of *England*, he found it impossible : But the Church of *England* being then in *Distress*, and threatned with Destruction by the *High Commission Court*, and several Gentlemen applying to the Dissenters to join in calling over the *Prince of Orange*, they readily laid aside all their Resentments at their former ill Usage, and not distinguishing the Niceties and Disputes between them, as Church of *England* and Dissenter, at such a time as that ; they join'd heartily as one General Body of Protestants United in Interests, United in Doctrine, however differing in Opinions and Circumstances ; and Capitulating for *their Liberty only*, they universally join'd in the Blessed Revolution of this Island.

If any Man will undertake to censure the Conduct of the Dissenters in this Case, and say, they acted with less Policy than Charity, or with more Good Nature than Discretion, I must desire them to remember, the Dissenters and the Church in *England* ought to be consider'd in several and separate Capacities.

1. *As a Nation*, and respecting their Civil Policy, as *English Men*, they stand all upon one Foundation, viz. Of Law, Liberty and Right ; when ever they separate, they are both

both destroy'd and both undone, and therefore, when ever the Dispute comes to be *between* Liberty and Tyranny, *between* Law and Dispensing Power, Property, and Arbitrary Government, the Church of England and Dissenters were *ever together*, as one Body of *Free Born English-Men*, United in Opposition to Slavery and Bondage, and they must both have been distracted, if it had been otherwise.

2. *As Protestants*, respecting Reformation in general, they are still one United Body of Christians, in Doctrine, Charity and Interest the same, and therefore, whenever the Dispute comes to be *between* the Papist and the Protestant, *between* Idolatry and true Worship, *between* the Purity of Religion and the *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, they are still one Body of Protestants, Detesting and Renouncing the Errors of Rome, Espousing heartily the true Reformation, and Professing together the same Lord JESUS.
3. But if you respect them as *Particular Churches*, then indeed you find them differing in Judgment and Opinion about the Circumstantials of Religion, such as *Habits, Ceremonies, Worship and Discipline*; yet this Difference, as it is not essential to Religion; so it does not, or, at least, ought not to break in upon their Mutual Charity, or National Interest; much less upon their Civility and good Manners, and therefore all *Revilings and Reproaches* are to be carefully avoided between the Lovers of Peace on both sides, and 'tis what the Dissenters

have always pleaded for, *having suffered most by that usage*; and I hope, shall be the last that return upon the Church, what they have so long complained of.

4. In speaking of them *as regarding the Church of Scotland*, this Distinction also ought to be made, *viz.* That the Dissenters were once a part of the Church of England, and have *only separated from them* for Purity of Worship, Church-Government, &c. 'Tis therefore quite another thing for them, to desire to be restored to their National Union, than for the Church of Scotland, who never were a part of their Body; And since yet they do not offer to comply, but on Terms justifiable by the Word of GOD, there remains no Censure due to them, *but such as do blame them*, show their want of Judgment, and want of Charity both together; Nor is it any sufficient Exception, to say they *did not declare against the Compliance of any*, since they have always in Practice done it, and 'tis known they have no Power of Censure——.

Thro' infinite Persecutions, Fines, Jails, and harassing of several kinds, they are *at last* arriv'd to a legal Liberty, a true Foundation Right, which is called a *Toleration*; on this Foot they now stand.

On all Occasions they have declar'd they cannot comply with the Church in the Article of Bishops——, *Comprehensions* have been projected; but they *have always been concluded* impracticable, and the Presbyterian declares himself not able to conform.

Their Differences are *meerly conscientious*, they have suffered all Severities for their Consciences, and cannot without great want of Charity, *be distrusted*, or suspected as Episcopally inclined:

Conclusion.

IT remains to say something here to the present Circumstances of both Kingdoms, as now going to incorporate and unite, and in this I shall be very plain; but, I hope, not at all injurious to any Body, and shall direct my Words as General as I can.

The *Word Union* directs my Discourse, Union is the Theme; and 'tis Peace *in this Union* I shall plead for; however you condemn the Man, listen to the Doctrine; for let who will *send the Teacher*, the Teaching is from Heaven:

I cannot but think every Obstruction to this Doctrine, *out of Season*, I am sorry so just a Hint should give so great Offence, but *Truth will never fail to justify its Owner*.

It cannot but be *out of Season*, to talk of the Sinfulness of a thing after 'tis done. which we applauded or at least, against which we said nothing before.

It cannot but be *out of Season* to rip up the Follies and Mistakes of Men who are dead, and cannot answer for themselves, especially of Good Men, whose shining Patterns deserve better Treatment.

It cannot but be *out of Season*, to Preach up distrust between a Society of Brethren at a time, when they are going to unite.

It cannot but be *out of Season*, to fill the Heads of the People with these Distrusts, and raise Jealousies and Divisions, where general Charity, and mutual Assistance must be the Principal Humane Support of both.

In the present Circumstances of these Kingdoms, I know nothing so essential to the Felicity of both, as mutual Confidence in, and Affection to one another.

The

The want of this is the only thing that can make all the *Elegmatick Predictions* of the Enemies of both come to pass, Union of Nations, without Union of People, Union in Generals, without Union in Particulars, Union of Constitution, without Union of Interest, will make the Union a meer Name, and bring to pass all the Mischiefs either side can apprehend.

'Twill defeat all the Endeavours either side can exert, to convince one another of their Sincerity; every kind Action, every Concession, every Contrivance to oblige and engage on either side, will be rendred suspected, and taken for Traps and Snares to draw in, and circumvent one another.

Mutual Distrust will be the Poison of every Good Desire, 'twill ruine Commerce, debauch Conversation, slacken Endeavours, discourage Friends, encourage Enemies, blow up Feuds, scandalize Religion, dishonour God, and ruine the Nation.

I shall sum up this Matter here in as short a Head as the Subject will permit, I have not room to speak to the Head of the Dissenters here in *Scotland*, as I purposed to do; I hope, in another place, I may state that Case, together with my Thoughts about Toleration, in a larger manner: Mean time, I desire to apply a little what has been said to the present Circumstance between the Dissenters and the Accusers. —

First, I frankly own the Distrust and Jealousies endeavour'd to be fomented here, between the Church of *Scotland* and the Dissenters in *England*, is far from being the General Act of the Ministry, or of the most judicious of the People here: And among those many of the Reverend Ministers, who I have the Honour to converse with, I find a General Concern, th at any thing so unkind should be offer'd to them: Nor shall I fail to do them all the Justice, both here and in *England*, that I can on that Head, that the Spirit of Distrust

strust may spread no farther, and the Innocent may not be Censur'd with the Guilty.

My Discourse therefore is not to them, but to those who the Unhappy Temper has prevail'd upon, and who are too much drawn in to entertain fatal Suspicions, and ill grounded Prejudices, against their Brethren, and 'tis to them I crave the Liberty of speaking.

What Love, Gentlemen? What Charity? What Mutual Assistance? What Advantages of Commerce? What Strength against Foreign, or Guard against Domestick Enemies? What Security of Liberty at Home, or Safety from Encroachments Abroad? If we cannot trust one another.

'Tis mutual Distrust has kept these Nations so long divided, and been the Occasion of such Seas of Blood being shed between them; all the widowed Families, the helpless Orphans, the distressed Provinces in either Kingdom, for these 300 Years by-past, have been principally produc'd by this Monster.— This Child of Hell has been in every Mischief, in every Plot, in every War between the two Nations.

To destroy this Devil, this present Union is contriv'd; 'tis for this all the Councils of both Kingdoms have been employed; 'Tis to prevent this all the Enemies of our Peace have struggled: And if after all the Hazards run, all the Tumults, Rabbles and Mischiefs threatned, all the Endeavours of the Queen and her wisest Counsellors, *this part should not be obtain'd*, all the Attempts of a politick Union will be in vain.

What shall we say to an Endeavour, *after an Union is as it were concluded between the Nations*, to render the best People in both Nations, and perhaps in the World, suspected to one another.— Shall I, thro' Favour, or Fear of Reproach, say, 'tis *Honest*, or *Fair*, or *Christian*, or *Seasonable*? God forbid I should dare to approve,
what

what the Scripture says himself hates, *Prov. 6. 19. Him that soweth Discord among Brethren.*

Brethren of the Church of Scotland, if the Dissenters in *England* are not to be trusted; whither will ye seek? What shall your Temporal Peace depend upon? What upholds the Interest of Religion in *Britain*, but that Glorious Body of Protestants, that from a few Years of the first Reformation, have been daily Confessors for that Purity of Worship, which they always profess'd, and *which you enjoy?*

Why should they be distrusted that never abandon'd their Cause, that never deserted the strong Foundation of Truth and Liberty, that have defended it, and are at last built upon it *in common with your selves?*

The Laws of *Britain* are their Safety now, and yours also; the Civil Capacity is the Foundation-Security now of your Religious Capacity; *Magna Charta* is yours by the Union *as well as theirs*; the Great Liberties of *England* are now laid open in common with you——; a Foundation *so strong, so certain, so sure*, that should the greatest Monarchs that ever reign'd in *Britain* invade it, *even the Persecutors themselves* would join with you, to pull them down.

You are all built upon Law and Liberty, that is the Rock that supports you all, and you have now nothing to do, but *like your Stones in an Arch*, by shouldering up one another, make your Strength invincible. Thus united like the same Arch, the more weight is laid on you, the stronger you grow; but dislocate one Stone only, and it falls by its own weight, into a heap of meer Rubbish and Disorder.

Suffer a Stranger to exhort you to what your own Interest ought to guide you to, and what your Experience will bless him for hereafter, *unless by your unbelief, your Carcasses fall into this Wilderness of Strife*, and if that should happen, your Posterity will acknowledge it.

Study Peace, Study to be Quiet, and mark such as sow Divisions among you— ; for where there is Strife and Contention, there is every Evil Work.

For my self, I shall say little, I have quitted the just Resentment at unsufferable Insolencies, that I might with the utmost Calmness of Mind, move *Scotland* to Peace, and practise the thing I exhort to— ; the Gentleman that opposes me in this, shall not rally me only in Print, but he shall trample me under his Feet ; I am content to be all that is contemptible and vile in his Eyes, and in every Man's else, if I can but be instrumental in the least to this blessed healing Temper.

It wounds every Honest Man to the Soul, to see a Spirit of Bitterness and Slander gone out among you, biting and devouring, and distrusting one another, at a time, and in a very Debate of National Union.

I verily believe God in his Providence has determined the Blessed Union of these two Nations ; I foresee all the Malice of Hell cannot oppose it ; the strange concurrence of Circumstances points out the Finger of Providence in every Point of it, it has been made up of Miracle, and unaccountable Junctures in its Periods. I beseech you, Gentlemen, let not your unbelieving rob you of the Blessing of it, and adjourn the Comforts so, that like the Elders at *Samaria*, you should see it, but not taste of it.

I see nothing objected but Chimeras, May-be's, Supposes, Suggestions—, What-ifs, and the like ; one convincing Demonstration of the Sincerity of your Brethren in *England* will crush them all, and how will you be ashamed of your Suspicions and Jealousies ; how will you regret the unkind Treatment of your Friends, who will thus requite you Good for Evil, and heap Coals of Fire on your Heads ?

If you would compare the certain Evils you have avoided by it, with the suggested Evils that they say
are

are in prospect, there can be no rational Comparison drawn, Jacobitism, Popish Succession, *French* Tyranny, Popery and War,——these are avoided, and must have followed, what can there be before you to equal these ?

If therefore you have any regard to Justice, to Truth, to your Interest, to your Religion, Liberty or Posterity, calm your Minds, and fortifie your Souls with peaceable Ideas, leave Jealousies and Suspicions to lie a-sleep in the misty Heads of the Ignorant ; For Distrust is the Product of a barren Understanding ; if your Eyes are open, you cannot but see your Safety and Prosperity in an hearty Affection, an Union of Love, an Union of Interests, and an Union of Charity.

Without it, all's an empty Shadow, and must in time tend either to the Ruine of the General Peace, or of the particular Opposers of it.

My Friends tell me, I lay my self too low in this Paper, and that the Adverse Party have Ingenuity little enough to insult me upon this Head ; indeed I find little Ingenuity enough in the Party : But when I consider who they are, how mean in Character, how scandalously few in Number, how empty their Malice, and how ridiculous their Methods with me, 'tis a compleat Satisfaction, and I am perfectly unconcern'd for the rest.

Most of the Persons, who I complain of, are really contemptible in every part of them ; their Principles, as they are opposite to mine, are so to all Honest Men, their Reproaches I value not enough ; to gratifie so much as their meanest Expectations ; for with me it shall ever be calm without, when it is clear within ; and for just Matters of Scandal, I have fairly defy'd them.

As they are Enemies of God, so they are to the Government, to the Reformation, and to Good Men, and by consequence to the Union, which is plainly the
Work

Work of the first, and the Desire of the last ; and it is the Glory of her Majesty's Government, that it aims at nothing but what concurs both with the Glory of one, and the Wishes of the other, I mean Piety and Peace.

If there was any thing else in the Design, I bless God, I was never a Slave to any Government in the World ; I was never frightened by Power, when I was crush'd by its Fury, and I could never be brib'd by its Gifts, when in the most proper Circumstances to want them. I would not write a word, no, not for the Queen her self, if my Conscience and Principles did not say Amen to the Subject ; and I challenge the World to say, when ever I acted otherwise ?

The Party therefore in nothing more mistake me, than in thinking, that when, for Peace sake, I avoid Reflecting on their Follies, 'tis for any Value or Fear of their Resentment ; they must be little acquainted with the Scenes I have acted in World, who know me no better than that, and I refer them to the Resentments of Men much more Capital than their Ambitious Thoughts can pretend to, and let them see the Influence their Anger has had on me.

But all this Humility of mine is for the sake of a few, *a very few indeed*, who, tho' Passion and Prejudice may over-rule them, and run them to Inconveniencies, tho' they may go a little out of themselves, I yet hope are good Men in the main, and design no general Mischief ; these, I am shy of exposing, and tho' in this they unwarily propagate the *Jacobite Cause*, and unhappily fall in with that fatal Principle that would ruine us all, yet, in Tendernefs to their Characters and Office, *and on no other Account*, I behave calmly and carefully to them, hoping that in due time, they shall be better informed.

For the rest, their Principles are abominable, their Ways of Propagating them are Unchristian and Irrational,

tional, their Methods are Detested by all honest Men, and to me they merit the utmost Contempt.

Very few also are the Number of the deceiv'd Profelytes they have made, not one in twenty, even of the Ministers that I have known, are of their Opinion: And I have such a Testimony from some of the best of that Reverend Body, of their Satisfaction in my honest Design, and their just Regard to the Dissenters in *England*, that I can, *with the utmost Peace*, bear the Reproaches of the small Number that thus Attack me.

May the God of Peace move this Nation to Thoughts of their own Happiness, and cool the evil Spirit that now endeavours to disquiet the Minds of those that otherwise mean no Ill to their Native Countrey.
Amen.

F I N I S.